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ABSTRACT

These proceedings consist of summaries of the following papers and discussions that were presented at a conference designed to bring leaders from education, business, state and local government, and labor together to discuss Minnesota's need to address the issue of basic skills in the workplace. The volume begins with a foreword by Rosemarie Park and includes summaries of the following: a presentation made by Harold Hodgkinson entitled "Basic Skills and the Workforce: Demographic Trends," a "Roundtable on Urban Youth" that was convened by Mary Jo Richardson on the basic and work skill needs of urban youth, a roundtable that was chaired by Monica Manning on workers being recycled into high technology, a roundtable that was chaired by Jeff Farmer on the educational needs of workers in manufacturing industries facing retraining, a roundtable that was jointly chaired by Greta Ploetz and Paul Moe on the educational needs of the structurally unemployed, and a speech by State Senator Roger Moe entitled "A Legislative Response to the Training and Retraining Needs of One State." (MN)

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PROCEEDINGS

BASIC SKILLS AND WORKFORCE TRAINING,RETRAINING AND PRODUCTIVITY

ED266286

University of Minnesota

Basic Skills and the Workforce

An Invitational Conference to Address the Training and Retraining and Productivity of Minnesota Workers

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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EDITED; ROSEMARIE J. PARK
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

DECEMBER, 1984 2

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Foreward

Rosemarie J. Park, University of Minnesota

The Basic Skills and the Workplace Conference was designed to bring leaders from education, business, state and local government and labor together to discuss the need for basic skills in the workplace. The goal of the conference was to develop a network of people who by their unique positions could have some impact on the problems we were discussing. These proceedings may act as a starting place and as a guide as others approach the problem of the changing educational needs of American workers.

My sincere thanks go to ADC Magnetic Controls Company, B. Dalton, Booksellers, Control Data Corporation, Dayton's, Honeywell, Inc. International Multifoods, The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership, The Institute for Educational Leadership and Target Stores whose contributions made this conference possible. In addition, my thanks go to Senator Roger Moe whose help made this conference possible.

Basic Skills and the Workforce: Demographic Trends

Summary of the presentation made by Harold Hodgkinson,
Senior Fellow, Institute for Educational Leadership

Demographic trends

We live in an era of considerable change. Often educators are unaware of what these changes are or how educators will be affected. This is a summary of some of the major demographic trends that will affect education and the workforce in the next decade.

Region

The present population resides overwhelmingly east of the Mississippi River. Half the population lives in the Eastern time zone, 30% in Central, 4.5% Mountain and 14.5% Western.
New York City is twice the size of Los Angeles.
High technology can be found in places other than Silicon Valley. Of the 26 "Strip Cities" Americans are migrating to, the vast majority are east of the Mississippi. However, it is true that most of the predicted growth for the U.S. will be in non-Frost Belt areas.

Age

There is a decline in youth in the country. There will be 5 million less teenagers in 1992. This decline will be heavily concentrated in the Northeast. This decline is now hitting higher education. Whereas 6000 schools were closed in the Frost Belt, 4000 new schools were opened in the Sun Belt. The national decline in youth is about 22%, but this will affect states in a very unequal way. Births are now rising a little, but again that increase is away from the Frost Belt.

There are great differences in the ability of states to hold students in high schools. Minnesota leads the nation by holding 86%, while Mississippi graduates only 61%.
The differences to the states' economy are spectacular, in Minnesota virtually all the youth are a "net gain" to the state, since they have the prerequisites to get a good job and pay state taxes. They will require few dollars in state taxes. In Mississippi, close to half their youth will be a "net loss" since without a high school diploma they will reduce their chances of becoming consistent salary earners.
Their need for state and federal services will be high. Retention through high school nationally is declining, down from 76% to 73%.

Race

We are now in the middle of a second major immigration wave this century. Fourteen million immigrants are in America today. The new immigrants are

Hispanic and Asian-Americans including those from Vietnam, China and Japan, Taiwan, Philippines and Korea. Of these 14 million, 6 million are public school age. These will impact the community college system particularly.

Today there are 26 million Blacks in the U.S. and 14 million Hispanics. In 40 years there will be 44 million Blacks and 47 million Hispanics plus a growing, not yet counted, number of Asian Americans. Due to fertility rates among groups, Hispanics will clearly become the largest minority group in the future. The reason for increased births is clear--the average white female in the U.S. is 31 years old, the average black is 25, and the average Hispanic is 22. The acceleration of minority youth means that the current generation of "baby boomers" will be dependent on minority youth for their social security. In any number of states, the number and percentage of minority youth are now so large that if they all fail to be well educated and get good jobs, whites in those states will find it difficult to achieve their own goals because of the drain on social resources.

Major changes are taking place in the American family. Only 11% are households with a working father, housewife mother and two or more school age children. Of the children born in 1983, 53% will live part of their lives before reaching 18 with a single parent.

Changes in the workforce.

The economy in the U.S. has been able to generate new jobs and pull itself out of recessions. Nine-tenths of new jobs have been in service areas. Most of these jobs are generated by the 580,000 small businesses started each year in the U.S.

High technology will only generate a handful of jobs. The new Macintosh computers are produced almost automatically.
Today 3 million farm workers produce more than twice the food produced by 12 million farm workers in 1910.

There is a "declining middle" of the workforce. We are generating a small number of executive, professional and managerial jobs and a very large number of low-level service, clerical and sales jobs. There is a major lack of "bridge" jobs that have always allowed American workers to move up in the organizations they serve.

In 1982 the economy generated only 30,000 jobs for computer programmers, while generating 757,000 jobs for retail sales clerks. With about 21 million jobs being generated by 1990, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that high tech will add about 11 million jobs.

General Motors, which has nothing but well-paying "middle class" jobs now hires fewer people than does McDonald's. One worker in four now has a college degree, but are we generating the type of interesting, complex, rewarding jobs to hold such people? Increasingly jobs are being "dumbed down" so that almost anyone can do them, and usually at far less salary.

Conclusion

The American Economy has an amazing capacity to generate new jobs, but the nature of these new jobs does not require high levels of education. The worst case scenario for the future is that young minorities with higher educational levels than their parents , will find their opportunities limited to low level service and clerical jobs. The job structure must somehow be kept in synch with the higher educational level of minorities. Now that the Baby Boom is in the workplace there may even develop a labor shortage as youth seeking work declines in number.

The only growth market in higher education will be in the adult learner —probably a worker, probably head of household— and probably a woman or minority. Competition for these students will be fierce. Some 46 million adults are engaged in systematic learning in some location other than higher education. ASTD says about 10 million courses taken by 18 million workers are run by businesses. Two- thirds of these are offered in-house. The military educates between two and three million service people and gives degrees as well. Higher education has lost and will continue to lose market share as the number of adults engaged in serious education and training increases.

1. URBAN YOUTH: WORK SKILLS = BASIC SKILLS ROUNDTABLE

The roundtable was convened by Mary Jo Richardson, planner for the state's Department of Economic Security. She announced that the purpose of the roundtable was to generate creative ideas for what a group representing many sectors in the Twin Cities area could do to assist urban youth develop work attitudes and interpersonal skills identified by employers as necessary for entry into the workplace. The group was asked to focus particularly on the needs of those youth whose habits, attitudes and interpersonal skills would be a barrier to getting or keeping a job.

Prior to the conference, each roundtable participant had received a copy of "High Schools and the Changing Workplace: The Employer's View," National Academy Press, 1984. This report outlined the competencies a panel of employers believe are necessary for young people entering the workforce directly out of high school. Included in the list were the following:

Interpersonal Relationships. Success in a career depends on the capacity to deal constructively and effectively with others. In turn, this depends on a knowledge of behavior appropriate to and customary in the workplace. Young people must understand that the standards of behavior, speech, and dress expected of employees often differ markedly from those acceptable in student circles. They also must realize that conflicting interests and opinions are inherent in many social interactions, but that such conflicts can and should be resolved through constructive means. Finally, they must recognize that employers cannot tolerate behavior, even if innocently intended, that offends customers, colleagues, other employees, or members of the general public. Effective interpersonal relations require the ability to:

* Interact in a socially appropriate manner
* Demonstrate respect for the opinions, customs and individual differences of others
* Appreciate the importance and value of humor
* Offer and accept criticism constructively
* Handle conflict maturely
* Participate in reaching group decisions

Personal Work Habits and Attitudes Personal work habits indicate the level of responsibility one is capable of assuming. Positive habits and attitudes contribute significantly to success in performing tasks, dealing with others, and gaining employment. They are also vital to success in school and should be cultivated long before a student enters the work force. Constructive work habits and attitudes require:

* A realistic positive attitude toward one's self
* A positive attitude toward work and pride in

accomplishment
* A willingness to learn
* Self-discipline, including regular and punctual attendance and dependability
* The ability to set goals and allocate time to achieve them
* The capacity to accept responsibility
* The ability to work with or without supervision
* Appropriate dress and grooming
* An understanding of the need for organization, supervision, rules, policies, and procedures
* Freedom from substance abuse
* Appropriate personal hygiene.

It was on these characteristics, informally tagged as "work skills," that the roundtable participants were asked to focus their attention.

To reinforce the everyday realities of the assignment, various participants of the roundtable spent a few minutes offering personal experiences with youth.

". . . the kid was always late, he didn't like the job and thought it was meaningless, but didn't know how to express the problem" . . . "General Mills is a large company and the kid couldn't see how he fit in such a large place, and how jobs work from entry level to retirement" . . . "the girl had a chemical dependency problem and didn't realize it."

Then the participants formed three small groups to brainstorm and refine ideas, and to develop some criteria by which to judge the merit of these ideas. The small groups were facilitated by Mayor Don Fraser, Willis Bright and David Nasby. Brief opportunities to interchange information among the groups offered additional ideas and direction.

The roundtable produced 73 ideas and 8 criteria (both attached). These lists were later sent to participants and follow-up phoning was done to identify their priorities for the ideas with the greatest merit, based on the criteria. (The numbers at the end of each item represent the number of times it was mentioned by the 24 participants we were able to reach by phone.)

Perhaps their views can be best summarized by saying the group believes young people need reality training in what the work world is really like and what skills and behavior are expected.

A strong consensus among the respondents was that opportunities for successful work experiences must be developed in school and/or out of school. Part-time jobs, work study jobs, experience-based career education, learning work habits in school, mentorships, cooperative education, summer work -- with helpful communication with and understanding by supervisors -- were mentioned. The youths with the greatest problems in entering the workplace appear to be those with the fewest role models and the least access to work experiences through family and neighborhood contacts.

Other ways in which the larger community can help young people learn work skills are through involvement in schools -- as tutors and classroom speakers -- and through student visits and field trips to work sites.

IDEAS FOR ASSISTING URBAN YOUTH DEVELOP THE WORK SKILLS, ATTITUDES AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS NEEDED FOR EMPLOYMENT

School Programs

1. Encourage role-playing to develop interpersonal skills (2)

2. Assure career counseling through classes about what's going on in the economy.

3. Use case studies in classrooms followed by problem-solving about economic futures (0)

4. Promote financial support for cooperative education in the schools (3)

5. Teach kids how to set and reach goals (4)

6. Be honest and accurate with kids about work futures . . . They will have to change jobs, and must be able to be adaptive (3)

7. Teach budgeting. How do you get along with low pay? How do you have fun for free? (0)

8. Stop pushing work so early. Provide useful breathing periods. (0)

9. Increase awareness of the utility of entry-level jobs . . . McDonald's as a stepping stone (6)

10. Provide opportunities for jobs in school to provide a gradual transition to work (4)

11. Use videotapes of mock interviews as teaching tool. (2)

12. Develop understanding of term "technology." It is now an intimidating term, suggesting need for college education . . . a maze. It means simply, "know-how," and should be described in terms more relevant for all youth. (0)

13. Provide experience-based opportunities . . . action learning (4)

14. Develop individual work plans (1)

15. Market good skills development programs (1)

16. Start with young children in stressing work skills (3)

17. Provide GEDs free through the state-funded program for dropouts (4)

18. Present basic information on "how to present myself" to high school seniors . . . working on development on self-esteem (6)

19. Establish expectations in schools for courtesy, respect for others . . . "yes, sir," punctuality, socialization skills (6)

20. Provide more programs for adolescent parents in parenting (4)

21. Develop programs to foster responsibility for self, starting early with first grade or kindergarten (3)

22. Make work skills part of h.s. requirements. Even p.t. is a learning experience. All courses can teach personal skills, work skills (3)

Peer Programs

23. Use peer models (1)

24. Increase exposure of youth to good peer models (6)

25. Encourage kids to work with kids as a positive experience (1)

26. Use "Good Youth Employees" as role models (1)

27. Provide programs for youth to tutor youth, particularly SE Asian youth in basic skills (1)

Employer Programs

28. Make uninteresting jobs more rewarding (needs follow-up by Brinda) (1)

29. Develop strategies to hire youth in small clusters to avoid isolation of youth (5)

Lobbying Programs

30. Remove penalties for working for AFDC recipients. Provide incentives to earn money without affecting parent's welfare benefits (8)

31. Develop industrial policy, considering the question: "Will we accept the job future which is described?" (0)

32. Provide expanded headstart and preschool education on a national basis (4)

33. Promote a National Volunteer Youth Service to provide transitional year after high school (2)

Public-Private Partnerships Focusing on Youth

34. Provide opportunities for youth to go on field trips to businesses and spend an 8-hour day shadowing (4)

35. Use business mentors as volunteer tutors (3)

36. Bring people from business into schools to talk about their jobs (6)

37. Provide classes for youth within the business environment (1)

38. Provide linkage to small businesses for youth interns (7)

39. Provide clinic setup by business with youth-serving agencies to teach work skills (1)

40. Provide clinic setup by business people to understand attitudes of disadvantaged youth (1)

41. Give kids some successful experience to develop self-esteem in relation to work (6)

42. Show "The Work Force Wants You!" on billboards (1)

43. Have Michael Jackson sing a song about the value of work (2)

44. Provide early unpaid internships as try-outs (0)

45. Maintain human contact . . . over and above TV and computers . . . as the best way to shape youth behavior (0)

46. Bolster Y's, Boys' Clubs, etc., and foster coordination (1)

47. Look particularly at programs for those who don't speak English or who are limited in communication abilities (3)

48. Encourage community groups (i.e., Black leadership) to take responsibility for reinforced teaching of basic skills (3)

49. Provide mentorships as an important experience for youth (2)

50. Reinforce Boston Compact concept of providing business rewards for education in return for doing good (2)

51. Provide infrastructure to set up work skills programs to address specific needs, including transportation to and from programs. (2)

52. Develop reality training . . . what business is really like and what skills and behavior is expected (7)

53. Provide incentive programs for youth with immediate carrots (2)

54. Expose groups to outside role models through networking (3)

55. Involve business/employment people in training youth in work skills (5)

56. Provide part-time jobs after school . . . paid work-study for youth sought out by employers (2)

57. Train tutors who are already working with youth (WISE and GISE, CRV, etc.) in career counseling skills (3)

58. Work on self-esteem, particularly with Indian youth, with support for basic items such as clothing (2)

59. Promote attractive TV program for teenagers such as Sesame Street for younger children . . . addressing job skills and communications skills (1)

60. Restore work-study programs in junior and senior high voc ed (3)

61. Develop a corps of mentors/volunteers (2)

Public-Private Partnerships Focusing on Employers

62. Educate business community to needs of youth

63. Provide courses on youth development for corporate human resources personnel (0)

64. Provide youth incentive grants to support small business involvement (3)

65. Develop employers and community awareness of cultural differences (3)

66. Provide incentives to put $ into job training and retention (4)

67. Encourage set aside of job openings with a serious commitment to well-trained youth (0)

Public-Private Partnerships Focusing on Families

68. Provide individual and family counseling for self-esteem (5)

69. Provide family-based career counseling program in the home (3)

70. Provide liberal leave policies for parents to parent their children (2)

71. Develop "Bring your Kid to Work Day" (4)

72. Teach parents to teach kids in the work place (1)

73. Train parents through volunteers working with churches and other institutions (1)

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING MERIT OF EMPLOYABILITY INITIATIVES

1. Continuity
   Demonstrates capacity to provide staying power over 10-year period.

2. Simplicity
   Uses small work units to develop meaningful relationships. Demonstrates simplicity in action plan.

3. Cost-Effectiveness
   Provides effective program at little cost.

4. Public-private collaboration
   Consistently includes business and labor and educators in process which involves all participants and requires agreement on outcomes and builds bridges among participants. Overcomes artificial barriers.

5. Adaptability to specific needs
   Adaptable to neightborhoods, specific individual needs. Sensitive to continuing change. Recognizes gap between expectations of employers and youth worker skills. Fits jobs with people looking for jobs.

6. Motivation
   Motivates movement into the world of work. Provides incentives for youth to meet employers' expectations.

7. Organized pattern of programs
   Doesn't duplicate programs already in place. Fits the big picture and fits an organized pattern of programs.

8. Early intervention
   Encourages readiness rather than late intervention.

2. Educating Workers Being Recycled into High Technology Jobs

Chair: Monica Manning, Director, Minnesota Job Skills Partnership

Introduction

The workforce is currently undergoing significant change. The need for retraining and job retraining has never been greater. Estimates show that 90% of the workforce of 1990 is currently in the workforce. The figure for the year 2000 is 80%.

A recent study showed that 37% of firms provide remedial training in reading, writing and mathematics.

Panelists

1. Studies of schools in Minnesota show that much has to be done in the areas of science and mathematics. Society demands that citizens have a basic understanding and appreciation of math and science. Yet more needs to be done to prepare students adequately. Schools must teach a core set of competencies essential for all adults.

   Most importantly, we must instill in children a love of learning and the mind set to keep on learning. Adults as mentioned in the introduction must be able to adapt and adjust.

2. The rapid pace of change has made human resources development extremely important. We must continue in our efforts to develop scientists and engineers. But we must also prepare technicians and allow all citizens to take advantage of their technical potential.

   As we change from an industrial to an information society, we must provide an adequate supply of qualified teachers. We must increase enrollment in science and math courses, especially by women and minorities. We must provide improved instructional programs involving a broad spectrum of the community. Colleges are caught in a bind with decreasing enrollment leading to fewer financial resources. This may hamper providing high quality science and math programs. Business can assist colleges by serving on advisory committees, providing personnel to teach courses and by donating money and supplies.

3. Not everyone is prepared or suited to high technology jobs. What about workers in the service industry? The

most rapidly expanding sector of the economy is the service sector. Yet pay is low and going lower. If high paying manufacturing jobs are disappearing, what will happen to the consuming power of these workers? As consuming power declines, will the economy die with it?

There is a need to focus on the needs of women reentering the work force. They face age discrimination on waitressing work where they often look for jobs. They become in a sense displaced workers.

4. The pace of technical change is quickening. The key element of competitiveness is not keeping up, but setting the pace. There are shortages of workers in high technology, but there are not jobs for those who are not technically trained. Can the average worker be retrained for these jobs? We must make technology the accepted thing.

   Four key elements must be present: 1. Information on present and anticipated job vacancies; 2. Education and training programs must be integrated and tied to specific employers; 3. Priorities must be set. Currently there is a lack of engineers and an excess of lawyers; 4. National and state policies must be set to identify and fill shortages and adjust retraining needs.

Concluding comments

In addition, it must be recognized that competition with 79 cent an hour jobs in Sri Lanka is the real problem.

High technology industries are not the sole answer. We need core industries in high technology that will develop service jobs. High technology is limited by the number of qualified workers.

Learning is a lifelong process. How do we attack the problem of the lack of basic skills of those who need retraining? How do we convince those being retrained to take jobs at lower salary?

Finally, there is a lack of reliable information that will enable us to make decisions of the types of training and retraining that are needed.

3. The Educational Needs of Workers in Manufacturing Industries Facing Retraining

Chair: Jeff Farmer, Minnesota AFL-CIO

Workers most often confronted with the need for retraining in Minnesota are those manufacturing where large numbers of plants are closing. High seniority employees over 45 years of age are being let go. Up to 40% of these workers may have not high school diploma or GED.

It is important to remember that although these workers lack reading and writing skills, they do have technical and work skills.

Training programs must address the following problems if they are to be successful:

1. Many displaced workers need basic skill training before they can successfully complete technical training.

2. Unemployment benefits often are withdrawn if a person attends training full time, so there are no funds to pay for retraining.

3. Many smaller companies do not have the funds to offer their own basic skill or other training programs.

4. It is unclear how long federal funds will be available to set up programs, so it is difficult to get state matching funds.

Efforts in Minnesota to combat these problems:

1. Area Vocational Technical Institutes are expanding their assessment abilities so they can target basic skills to those who are in need before they begin a specific course of study.

2. Control Data Corporation is informing employees about local adult basic education programs. Employees are encouraged to attend and given half company time off for attending.

3. Some businesses, specifically Onan Corporation, are offering on-site basic skills courses for their employees.

Efforts elsewhere in the United States:

Jim Kirk and Joe Vicari reported on projects in

Michigan. The United Auto Workers and the Ford Motor Company have set up a joint project funded both by Ford and the federal government. Under the terms of this agreement, 5 cents in each dollar earned is paid by Ford into a retraining fund for laid off workers.

The National Vocational education and tuition program pays $1000 tuition to any retraining program. It also offers career counseling.

The United Auto Workers offer assessment for basic skills training -- that is training that can best offer school diploma or GED.

The UAW program also analyses the local job market and provides realistic training that can best offer future employment. They have a 75% placement rate in jobs paying over $7 an hour.

Conclusions

1. Training programs need to so assessments to determine the needs of students so adult basic education can be offered before specialized training programs.

2. The problem of forfeiting unemployment benefits to attend training must be addressed.

3. Workers and unemployed or displaced workers need to be informed of available basic skills programs and encouraged to attend them.

4. The Educational Needs of the Structurally Unemployed

Chairs:Greta Ploetz, Director Literacy 85
Paul Moe, Department Vocational Rehabilitation

Introduction

The Literacy 85 survey of employers' perceptions of the need for basic skills training for employees was described. Many employers felt their employees might benefit from this type of training.

A second study done by the National League of Cities was introduced suggesting that the problem of employing the structurally unemployed rested mainly with the lack of available jobs rather than with lack of basic skills or education.

Demographic information was reviewed concerning the numbers of the unemployed: of the 7.5% who are unemployed, 6.4% are white, 16% black, 10% hispanic. Fifteen percent are teenagers, 42% of these black teens.

Discussion

Where do we find the structurally unemployed and how is structural unemployment defined? There is a need to identify whether structural unemployment is a result of a changing job base or a result of lack of skills or desire to work. The location of the chronically unemployed is critical because it determines the social and cultural milieu in which the solution to the problem must be determined.

The third issue to be considered is the problem of racial and sexual discrimination. Statistics are available on the employment of women, blacks, and black women which show that 37.5% of all black women are unemployed. Discrimination against women and minorities plays an important role in unemployment. The issue of structural unemployment cannot be discussed in an overall sense. Rather solutions should be found to specific types of unemployment faced by each group.

Structural unemployment was defined as those who have no jobs no matter how good the job market is. One reason such people may be unemployed is attitudinal: employers require attitudes on the part of employees that get them to work on time, properly dressed, and in a regular manner. If employees can't do this then their basic skills are immaterial. They need job getting and job keeping skills.

Solving this problem is compounded by the difficulty of helping people through the bureaucratic maze required to complete an education. Child care and funding are vital. When people take entry level positions they often do not earn enough to pay for child care services.

A second definition of structurally unemployed was given as those who need special or extraordinary intervention in order to successfully employ them.

One possible solution is to have government mechanisms in place to provide these types of interventions. The point was raised that there is a large child care support system available in Minnesota which cannot operate effectively because it is underfunded.

The point was made that structural unemployment is encouraged by public assistance and the welfare system. The majority of the group felt that people generally preferred work to welfare and chose welfare only when work threatened their family or individual survival because of low pay, inadequate child care or inadequate medical benefits. The Office of Management and Budget study was cited showing that people did not stay on welfare for long periods. Nationwide only 2% stay on welfare roles longer than 6 years. In Minnesota the average stay on welfare is less than 2 years. AFDC rolls in Minnesota are composed mainly of displaced homemakers who have families to support. A Harvard study found that there was less fraud in welfare than in student loan programs.

The problem, however, must be viewed in terms of helping those who want to work. How can those with backgrounds who have not taught them the need for work develop the necessary skills? These are the very people who do not attend or persist in adult education classrooms.

The problem is being exacerbated by the technological revolution in the workplace. When businesses find that they don't have workers who can handle the jobs they have, they turn to technology for solutions. Word processors and robots are now commonplace. The net effect is to make the requirements for entry level jobs higher. Basic skills needed by prospective workers just for entry-level positions are growing fast.

Solutions to the problem

1. Take programs to people. If people won't come out for programs, perhaps we should provide homebound programs.

2. Target more programs to specific populations, such as the Urban League's LEAP program.

3. Provide adequate support for women to train for jobs that will pay sufficient to support them. This includes child care and other psychological and social support necessary for women to train in non-traditional fields.

4. Free tuition should be available for people who need training to get reasonably paying jobs. Currently financial aid reduces the amount of public assistance aid - but there are still tuition costs to be met. This money would be returned to the state by less welfare payments later and more taxes paid.

5. Tax incentives should be provided to industry for training. Industry will train people if they come with the necessary basic skills.

6. Require people who take part in employment and training programs and successfully become employed to repay part of the cost of instruction to the government (The Department of Labor LEAP program requires this). This will ensure program continuation.

7. Outreach programs must involve government, labor and industry. Industry involvement is vital.

8. The information gap must be addressed. Educators need to know what expectations businesses have so workers can arrive properly equipped. The information needs to be communicated more quickly and effectively via some mechanism.

9. Technology should be used to solve the problem rather than letting technology define the problem. Computer technology can bring jobs and educational programs into the home. Cable can also facilitate this.

10. Adult education programs already in place should be assisted in working more effectively with the structurally unemployed.

11. Small businesses should be helped to employ many of the structurally unemployed and train them. Currently most of the job growth is in small businesses, but they cannot pay the high salaries and fringe benefits offered by larger companies. When they do successfully train an employee, that employee then leaves for employment in a more attractive higher paying job.

12. Public works programs may be necessary if the private sector cannot supply enough jobs. Such programs may avert social chaos caused by chronic unemployment in many sectors of society.

A Legislative Response to the Training and Retraining Needs of One State

A summary of the comments of Senator
Roger Moe, Majority Leader, Minnesota State Senate

You probably spent a good part of your afternoon thinking about the problems and solutions associated with retraining efforts as they relate to industry or an institution. I would like to take a minute to tell you about one thing the legislature has done to recognize the value of increased training and retraining efforts in this state. In the last legislative session we approved an appropriation of 1.5 million dollars to create what we call an administrative job skills partnership. This partnership is designed to improve the job skills of the state workers and match them with the growing demands for specific skills from employers.

There are economic shifts from manufacturing to high technology. Our schools and training programs must parallel this transition. There must be a match between what employers need and the skills of the available workers. The need to increase the numbers of workers with skills needed in the new economy is the basis for the Minnesota Job Skills
Partnership.

The concept of the partnership is simple. Its goal is to match employers needs for skilled workers with the teaching skills of our major institutions. There is partnership on many levels-- most important being partnership between employers and training institutions. Many employers are simply reluctant or cannot afford to pay the full cost for training or retraining potentially productive workers. By taking some of the financial risks in this effort, the State essentially reduces the employers' risk in this venture while providing for future employment.

Our program specifically targets funding for educational institutions that now provide job training to economically disadvantaged people, minorities, and others who are victims of economic discrimination. This act also works with existing retraining programs that have matching funds from the private sector.

The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership operates with a board of twenty-one directors and a small staff. They work closely with private employers to train and place workers in immediate positions. They assist schools and other institutions in designing training programs and provide matching grants for equipment and faculty. In addition to providing grants of up to $200,000 to qualifying institutions, this board is also authorized to collect information, prepare and publish studies, organize conferences and conduct projects to increase the available knowledge on the subject of training and education.

The partnership went into action in April 1984 by initiating a series of retraining programs in the private sector. The first program funded was $66,000 to provide a sophisticated auto-technicians training program involving 30 employees and several Twin City auto repair companies. The company contributed

about $70,000 to the program. Two hundred seventy-five people are receiving precision assembly training at Hutchinson Area Vocational-Technical Institute in conjunction with Hutchinson Technology Inc. Partnership investment of $100,000 leveraged an additional $130,000 in contributions from the firm which will be employing all 275 people throughout the training program. Twin Cities Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc. is receiving up to $80,000 in Partnership Funds to provide computer technician and test technician training for 30 persons. Under the agreement Honeywell will contribute another $321,000 which includes structures and structural material, supplies and $50,000 in cash donations for training space at its facilities. Ninety percent of trainees in this program are expected to be placed at entry level salaries of over $10,000 for computer technicians and over $14,000 for test technicians. To date $335,000 in Partnership grants have leveraged over $400,000 in investments in training over 500 people in Minnesota.

To sum up I would like to comment on how important the state's role is in educating our work force today. One of the premises of this afternoon's meeting is that we must be sure that our workers have enough skills, whether they be reading skills or technical skills to enable them to be employed as productive workers. We need to build on programs like the Job Skills Partnership. Even more important we must maintain our commitment to insure Minnesotans will come out of the public schools with the basic skills they need to succeed. Prior to the barrage of criticism about the inadequacy of our public school system nationwide, there existed a general feeling that we were headed in the right direction. Taking all criticism into account, we must recognize that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We know, for example, that today we have the most able and highly educated work force in the history of the world. This success has not come about by mere chance or happenstance. It has come out of a direct and orderly planned development of our school system based on equal access for all students in the public system. The commitment to excellence maintained by the legislature since the Minnesota Miracle Funding Formula of the early 1970's remains today and is unchallenged by the most severe critics. Although we have had to weather some temporary fiscal storms, such as the recent economic recession coupled with the federal government's reduced spending on education, we have recently increased our financial commitment to education at the state level. I am confident that we will continue to maintain this record of excellence in legislative sessions to come.

In addition, we will focus resources in those areas which can and will produce the most in return. Small business, high technology industries and economic develepment are such areas.

Today it is time to talk again about not only what's right with education, as Dr Hodgkinson has done in the past. We in this state must continue to dialogue about what is needed, and how we can more effectively utilise our available educational and human resources. The lack of federal government help notwithstanding, I know the Minnesota legislature stands strongly behind its intention to continue maintaining high levels of educational quality which place a value on people not just on profit. If we must, we will fill the void left by the absence of federal funding commitment for education. Most of all we will continue to understand, appreciate, and respect close ties between the workers of this country and educational opportunity.

Let me close by extending my thanks to Dave Roe, head of the most progressive labor unions in the country; the most progressive business community happens to be here in this state and to our outstanding educational institutions.